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C O N G R E G A T I O N
O F
P R O T E S T A N T D I S S E N T E R S,
A T H A C K N E T,

On the 10th of F E B R U A R Y last,

Being the Day appointed for a

G E N E R A L F A S T.

By RICHARD PRICE, D. D. F. R. S.

THE SECOND EDITION.

To which are added,

REMARKS on a PASSAGE in the BISHOP of
LONDON's Sermon on ASH-WEDNESDAY, 1779.

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SEYMOUR

CONGREGATION

OF THE DISTRICT

OF NEW YORK

AND OF THE STATE

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GENERAL

RICHARD R. R. R.

THE SECOND

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following discourse was composed in some haste, and without any particular attention to the stile ; and it is now published, with the addition of a few Notes, partly in compliance with the request of some who heard it ; and, partly, because it has been misrepresented. The notice which the author has taken of public measures, is such as came necessarily in his way in discussing the subject he had chosen, and in considering the present state of the kingdom. This, however, is the first time in which he has entered into politics in the pulpit, and, perhaps, it may be the last.

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G E N. XVIII. 32.

And he said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

YOU must all of you recollect that these words are represented as addressed to the Deity by the Patriarch Abraham, when he was interceding with him for the city of *Sodom*. There can scarcely be a more affecting representation; and it is not possible that on the present occasion, I should speak to you on a properer subject. The calamity by which *Sodom* and the whole country round it was destroyed, is one of the most antient as well as the most tremendous events, of which we have any account in history. We have a particular relation of it in the ninth chapter of this book of *Genesis*; and, throughout all the subsequent parts of scripture, it is referred to, and held forth as an example and a warning to other countries.—Thus in *Jude* we read, that *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the cities about

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them,

them, had been set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; that is, a fire which totally consumed them, and which appeared to be even still burning, and would probably burn till the end of the world. So likewise in the prophecy of Jeremiah, the Lth chapter and 40th verse, it is said that Babylon should no more be inhabited for ever; and that as God had overthrown Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities, so should Babylon be overthrown. And in Deuteronomy the xxixth and 23d, the prophetic denunciation against the children of Israel is, that if they forsake the Lord, and served other gods, their land should be turned into brimstone and salt and burning, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. And in Luke xvii. and 28th and following verses, our Lord, in admonishing his disciples to vigilance, directs them to think of the security and carelessness of the inhabitants of Sodom, before God rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. It is in allusion also to this event, that in the Revelation (ch. xix. 20, and xxi. 8.) the future extirpation of anti-christian delusion, and of the workers of iniquity, is expressed by their being cast into a lake burning with fire and brimstone.

That part of the land of Judea, where these devoted cities stood, was rich and fertile above all the other parts of Judea. In *Genesis*, chap. xiii.

xiii. we are told that when Lot separated from Abraham, he *looked over all the plain of Jordan, and saw that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Ægypt.* This induced great numbers of people to settle in this part of Judea; and, particularly, it engaged Lot and his family to settle here. It was an extensive plain, bounded to the east and west by very high mountains, about seventy-two miles in length and eighteen in breadth. Here several cities were built, the principal of which were *Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Zoar.* The causes that produced the richness of the soil, and crowded this country with inhabitants, were such as at the same time produced a corruption of manners, and rendered its ruin unavoidable. The fertility of the soil proceeded from a warmth communicated to it by subterranean fires. And this, probably, joined to the ease and indulgencies arising from a rich soil, contributed to enflame the passions of the inhabitants, and to render them so infamous as we are told they were for wickedness. But while they were rioting in voluptuousness, there was a dreadful enemy working below them, which had been destined by Divine justice to destroy them. The sun being risen upon the earth (as the history tells us) one morning; and Lot and his family (the only righteous persons left) having escaped by Divine direction,

rection, the flames burst forth, the whole country sunk at once, and water took its place. The Scriptures call this event *God's raining down from Heaven fire and brimstone*. The truth is, that it was an event of the same kind with many that have happened since; or an eruption of liquid fire from the bowels of the earth, like the eruptions from *volcanos*, attended with thunder and lightening and earthquakes. So shocking, in this instance, was the *catastrophe*, that a country, before one of the richest and best peopled in the world, was in one hour converted into a smoking lake, which has been ever since called the *Asphaltic* * lake, or the *Dead Sea*. The river Jordan had run through this country; but ever since it has discharged itself into this lake, and lost itself in it. Its water is salt and nauseous in

* That is, *the lake of brimstone*. The name of the DEAD SEA has been given it from the immoveable stillness of its waters, produced by the bituminous and unctuous matter mixed with it, and floating upon it. *Diodorus Siculus*, (Lib. xth, chap. 6.) in describing this lake, says, that though several rivers of sweet water empty themselves into it, the water of it is so bitter and stinking, that no fish can live in it; that great pieces of brimstone frequently rise from the bottom of it, and rest upon its surface like islands; and that the air on its coasts is so hot and so infected by sulphureous steams, that the inhabitants are very unhealthy and short-lived. Tacitus calls it, *lacus immenso ambitu, specie maris, sapore corruptior, gravitate odoris accolis pestifer. Neque venta impellitur, neque pisces patitur*,

the highest degree. Columns of smoke are seen at certain times to rise from it; and it is said, that in some parts of it ruins of buildings may still be seen*. Profane historians, as well as the scriptures, bear witness to the calamity which befell these cities. TACITUS says, "that where
 " the Dead Sea now is, there were formerly fruit-
 " ful fields and large cities, which were after-
 " wards consumed by thunder and lightening."† JOSEPHUS says, that the things which are related of Sodom are confirmed by ocular inspection, there being still visible relicks of the fire sent from Heaven, and the shadows of the five cities ‡. In the book of *Wisdom* (xth chapter and 7th verse) it is said of the inhabitants of Sodom, *that the waste land which yet smoketh, and the plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness, bear testimony to their wickedness.*

But it is most to my present purpose to give you an account of the notice which, in the verse before my text, the Deity is represented as giving to Abraham of his intention to destroy Sodom, and the intercession which Abraham is represented as making for Sodom. In the 17th verse, *Jehovah* is described as saying, *Shall I hide from Abraham that thing*

* See Mr. Maundrell's Travels, page 84, 85.

† Tacit. Hist. Lib. v. cap. 6.

‡ Jos. de Bell. Jud. Lib. iv. cap. 8.

which

which I do? seeing that in him all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; and I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. In the 22d verse we are told that Abraham drew near and said, *Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous persons within the city: Wilt thou not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.—And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: Wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five?—And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.—And Abraham spoke yet again and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there.—And the Lord said, I will not destroy it for the sake of forty.—And Abraham said again, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Peradventure there shall be thirty found there.—And the Lord said, I will not destroy it if I find thirty there.—And Abraham said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord. Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.—And Abraham said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once.*

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Peradventure ten shall be found there. And the Lord said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

Such is the account in this chapter. I suppose there is no occasion for telling you, that it is not to be understood, that there was on this occasion exactly such a dialogue as this between Abraham and the Governor of the World. It is, I apprehend, a kind of parabolical representation, contrived to impress our minds, and to convey, after the manner of the oriental nations in antient times, a more distinct and forcible instruction. Indeed, the whole account in this and the next chapter of the appearance of *Jehovah* to Abraham, of Abraham's intercession, of *Jehovah's* replies, of his promise to spare *Sodom* had there been found in it but ten righteous persons, and of the extraordinary care which was taken, by the interposition of heavenly messengers, to provide for the deliverance of righteous Lot; I say, this whole account is adapted, with the most striking propriety and energy, to convey to our minds some of the most useful and important lessons. It is, without doubt, founded on real facts, the manner only of telling these facts being to be considered as disguised and veiled by a mixture of allegory. Nor should we at all wonder at such a manner of relating facts, did we know how the antients wrote history, or by what methods the memory of important events was preserved

preserved and transmitted from one generation to another before the invention of letters.

The remarks I have now made should be attended to in reading many of the other accounts in this book of Genesis; and particularly those of the Creation, the Fall, and the Deluge.—But waving all observations of this kind, I would take occasion from the account I have read, to desire you to consider a circumstance in the scripture history which is very remarkable, and which distinguishes it from all other histories; I mean, the tendency which it has to display the justice and spotless holiness of the Deity, as the moral governor of the world. Other histories carry our views no higher than *second* causes, or the *natural* means by which events are produced; but this history constantly and uniformly carries our views to the *first* cause, and leads us to conceive of the providence of God as guiding the course of nature, and of his love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, as the springs of all the blessings enjoyed by nations, and of all the calamities which befall them. Thus, in the present instance, we are taught distinctly that the cause of the destruction of Sodom was the anger of the Deity against the inhabitants for their wickedness; and we are further led to form the most lively ideas of this truth, by being acquainted that had there been in it but ten righteous persons it would have been saved. The natural
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causes which produced its destruction would, in this case, either never have existed, or their operations would have been so directed as to suspend or prevent the calamity they produced. Nothing certainly can be more unreasonable, than to conclude that because an event has been brought about by natural means, therefore the hand of God has not been in it; or that, because we can trace the blessings and the sufferings of beings to certain powers, which are their immediate causes, therefore they can be under no direction from the moral government of the first and supreme cause. A little philosophy may incline a person to this conclusion; but a deep insight into philosophy, and an enlarged view of the laws and constitution of nature, will convince us of the contrary. Irreligion and atheism must be derived from miserable inattention and ignorance. True knowledge will necessarily make us devout, and force us to acknowledge that God is the cause of all causes, that his power is the source of all efficacy in nature, and his righteous providence the guide of all that happens.

But to return to the remark which occasioned these observations.—The Scriptures, I have said, direct us to conceive of God's love of righteousness and aversion to wickedness, as the principles which influence him in determining the fates of kingdoms. He regards communities with particular favour, on account of the number of vir-

tuous persons in them ; and he gives them up to calamity, only when this number is so inconsiderable as not to afford a sufficient reason for saving them. In such circumstances, or when virtuous men are very scarce among a people, they become, as this history teaches us, a devoted people, and they fall a prey to dreadful calamities and judgments.

But we are farther taught by this history, that when a people for their iniquities are visited with judgments, particular care will be taken of such righteous persons as may be left among them. This care will be different in different circumstances ; but it will be always such as will produce an infinite difference between *them* and the wicked part of a community. Sometimes it may extend so far as even to provide for their temporal security and happiness. When the country, to which they belong, comes to be devoted, they may perhaps be conducted by the hand of Providence to a region of peace and safety, where they shall escape the general desolation. Such was the privilege granted to *Lot* and his family. He was taken from Sodom, lest he should be consumed in its iniquity. Gen. xix. 15. And it is remarkable, that the messengers of Divine vengeance are represented as so anxious about his safety, that when he lingered, they laid hold of his hand and pulled him away,

away, saying, as we read in the 5th verse, *they could do nothing till he was safe*. How high an idea does this give us of God's care of virtuous men in a time of public calamity? In merciful condescension to our low conceptions, he is described as not having power to destroy this wicked country while there remained in it one virtuous man.

But there is a circumstance in this account still more remarkable. The place to which *Lot* was allowed to fly was a little town in the plain of Sodom, afterward called *Zoar*, which was itself one of the five devoted cities, but is represented as spared on purpose to provide an *asylum* for *Lot*. His virtue could not weigh so much, or avail so far, as to save the country; but, at the same time, such was the regard paid to it, that for the sake of it, a *part* of the country was preserved and given to *Lot* as a reward for his probity and piety in the midst of prevailing wickedness. As soon (we read) as he was safe lodged in this little city, the desolating tempest began, and all the country was swallowed up. Gen. xixth and 23d. When *Lot entered into Zoar, Jehovah rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and overthrew all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities*. So precious is righteousness in the sight of Heaven; and such favourites with the Judge of all the earth are all who practise it. In conformity to the representation on which I am insisting

we are led to conceive, that should there (in a time of public calamity) be no distant country provided by Providence, to which the righteous may fly, yet there may be some part of the devoted country itself spared on their account; and, that though their virtue may not avail so far as to prevent or suspend the effects of Divine resentment, yet it may render them less extensive and destructive.

You must, however, remember, that in the common course of things it is not to be expected, that in either of these ways God will manifest his care of the righteous. There may be no distant country to which they can fly, nor may an exemption for their sakes be proper of any part of the country to be destroyed; and, therefore, it may be necessary they should remain in it, and share its fate. In the present world, we know, the righteous often suffer with the wicked, and *indiscriminate* distress is permitted. In such circumstances, however, the Deity will still manifest himself a favourer and friend of the virtuous. The loss of worldly blessings will be made up to them by infinitely nobler blessings. Instead of that treasure on earth, which may be taken from them, they shall have a treasure in Heaven; and instead of a *temporal*, they shall be blest with an *eternal* deliverance. The distress, in which they may be obliged to share, will be alleviated to them by the reflection on their having
done

done their part to save their country ; by the unspeakable satisfaction attending the consciousness of their own integrity ; by communications of grace and support to their souls ; by a sense of God's love to them ; and the assured hope of an interest in his favour, and of a place under a government of perfect virtue and peace in the Heavens. These are springs of relief and felicity, which no calamities can destroy. They will communicate sweetness to the bitterest draughts, and render distress an occasion of joy and triumph. The worst that any calamity can do to a good man, is to take from him that which he does not value. His proper happiness is always secure ; and the enemy that tears him from this life removes him to a better. There full amends will be made to him for all those sufferings in which he may be involved by his connections with wicked men in the present state. It is, indeed, in the other world only that a perfect discrimination will be made between men, according to their different moral characters. It is there only that the wicked will cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest ; the righteous receive an adequate reward, and the wicked an adequate punishment. Let us, amidst the shocking scenes to which we are witnesses in this world, keep our eyes fixed on that awful state of universal retribution ; and never forget the period when (according to the assurance of our Saviour) the wicked shall be se-

vered from the just, and *the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.*

These reflections may help to give you an idea of the importance of righteous men in a kingdom, and of the favour that will be shewn them. It is to them that states owe their preservation. It is on them that the very being of a society depends; and when they cease or are reduced to a very small number, a nation necessarily sinks into ruin. But when this happens, and the Supreme Governor visits a nation with judgments, his providence watches over *them*, and we may consider him as saying to them in the words of *Isaiah*, xxvith chapter and 2oth verse, *Come ye into your chambers, and shut your doors. Hide yourselves for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast; for behold I come out of my place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.* Or we may apply to good men in such circumstances the words in the xcist Psalm. *Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord thy refuge, there shall no evil befall thee. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and shew him my salvation.*—Behold, says the prophet *Malachi*, *the day cometh that shall burn, as an oven, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble.*

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The day cometh which shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Mal. iv. 1, 2.

I cannot close these remarks without observing, that the striking lesson on which I am insisting, is farther taught us in a very extraordinary manner, by the account given us in this book of Genesis of the universal deluge. There are undoubted proofs that such a calamity has happened. The whole face of nature, as well as universal tradition, bear witness to it. The history in Genesis represents it as an effect of God's justice, or a judgment inflicted by him on mankind for their wickedness. All flesh (it tells us) was become corrupt, and the whole earth was filled with violence, insomuch that only Noah and his family were found righteous. Of this small remnant the Deity is represented as taking particular care, by forewarning them of the calamity, and directing an ark to be built for their preservation. Gen. vii. 1. *And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.* Thus was a whole world destroyed for the wickedness of its inhabitants, except one virtuous family, which was preserved in an ark, and selected from the rest of mankind to be the founders of a new race.

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The warning and admonitions, which such accounts give, should engage us to love and to seek righteousness above all things. When we consider what it is, we cannot wonder that it stands so high in the estimation of the Deity. It is his image in our souls. It is the foundation of all honour and dignity. It is the order by which the universe subsists. God, therefore, must delight in those who practise it, and we may with reason expect that his favour will extend itself to their connections; and that, on their account, their families, their friends, and their country will be blest. I have been shewing you that the Sacred History strongly inculcates this upon us. God will pardon a guilty nation for the sake of the righteous in it, if they are not too few. So we read in Jer. v. 1. *Run ye through the streets of Jerusalem, and see in the broad places thereof, if you can find any one who executeth judgment, and seeketh the truth, and I will pardon Jerusalem.* I can scarcely set before you a properer motive to the practice of virtue. If you are virtuous, you may save your country, by engaging God's favour to it. Do you then love your country? Have you any desire to be the means of preserving and blessing it? If you have, do all you can to increase the number of the virtuous in it; or, should you despair of success in this, resolve at least that you will unite *yourselves* to that number. Thus will you be your country's
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best friends; make yourselves powerful intercessors with the Deity for it, and stand in the gap between it and calamity. But should wickedness become so prevalent as to render calamity necessary, though, in this case, your country must suffer, yet care will be taken of you. Perhaps, you may be directed to some means of escaping from the common ruin; and a *Zoar*, or an *Ark*, may be provided for you, from whence you may view the storm, and find yourselves safe. Methinks, the friends of truth and virtue may now look across the *Atlantic*, and entertain some such hope. But should there be no resource of this kind left, the righteous will at least find resources of infinite value in their own minds; in the testimony of a good conscience; in the consolations of Divine grace; and the prospect of that country where they shall possess *an undefiled and incorruptible inheritance*.

My inclinations would lead me to address you some time longer in this way. But I must hasten to some observations of a different kind. My principal design on this occasion was to set before you the chief particulars in the characters of those righteous men who are a blessing to their country; and to point out to you the necessary dependence of the salvation of a country on such characters. I shall now desire your attention to what I shall say on these heads.

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With respect to the character of those righteous men, who are likely to save a country, I would observe, FIRST, that they love their country and are zealous for its rights. They obey the laws of the legislature that protects them, contribute chearfully to its support, and are solicitous, while they give to God the things that are God's, to give also to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*. They are, therefore, *loyal* subjects. That is, they do all they can to promote the good order of the state by complying with its laws, and bearing a constant and inviolable allegiance to it. This alone is genuine loyalty; and not any attachment to the *persons* of princes, arising from a notion of their sacredness. There cannot be any notion more stupid or debasing. The people are the fountain of all civil jurisdiction, and *theirs* is the true majesty in a state. There is no individual, who, as a member of any community, is more *sacred* than another, except as far as he is invested with the authority of the community, and employed in executing its will. Civil governors are, in the intention of nature and reason, the *servants** of the public; and whenever, forgetting

* King *James* the First, in his first speech to his parliament, declared, that " he should never be ashamed to confess it his
" principal honour to be the GREAT SERVANT of the com-
" monwealth." But in the very same speech, he calls his
people.

ring this, they imagine they possess *inherent* rights of dominion, and attempt to establish *their own* authority, and to govern by *their own will*, they become dangerous enemies; and all that is valuable to a state requires they should be opposed. The righteous citizen, therefore, whose character I am describing, at the same time that he is *loyal*, can have no notion of passive obedience and non-resistance. His duty obliges him to enquire into his rights, and to be jealous of them; to attend to the manner in which the trust of government is discharged; and to do *his* part towards keeping the springs of legislation pure, and checking the progress of oppression. Thus only can he prove himself a worthy and useful citizen*. It is a sad mistake to think that

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people his NATURAL VASSALS. It is, therefore, plain, he made this declaration from the same affected humility, or rather insolence, which has led the Pope to give himself the title of *Servant of Servants*.

* It is common to assert that resistance can be justified only in cases of extreme oppression. Mankind, in consequence of indolence and want of union, have generally acted agreeably to this principle; but it has lost the world its liberty. It implies, that resistance ought to be avoided, while oppression is growing, and till it becomes too late to resist successfully without setting every thing afloat, and producing dreadful convulsions. The truth is, that oppression cannot be resisted too soon; and that all the *tendencies* to it ought to be watched. Had this been always done, tyranny would have been crushed in its birth; and mankind would have been al-

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private men have nothing to do with the administration of public affairs; that there are *mysteries* in civil government of which they are not judges; and that, instead of ever complaining, it is their duty always to yield and follow. This is the same with saying that in every community the body of the people are only a herd of cattle, made to be led and disposed of as their owners please. Had such a vile principle been always acted upon, there would now have been no such

ways happy. If an *equal* and *virtuous* representation of the people of a state makes an essential part of its legislature, this may be done easily, and every grievance may be redressed, as soon as it appears, without disturbance or tumult; and this forms one of the distinguishing excellencies of such a constitution of government as ours. But if through a general degeneracy, the representation becomes partial and corrupt, a despotism may arise from such a form of government, which will be the very worst possible, and under which no hope may be left, except from a calamity that shall destroy the means of corruption, and awaken to repentance.

Mr. LINGUET, in a letter to VOLTAIRE, says of the people, that they are condemned to have only hands, and that mischief arises, and all is lost, the moment they are put upon thinking. *Voltaire* observes in reply, that, on the contrary, all is lost when they are treated like a herd of bulls; for, in this case, they will use their horns, and sooner or later gore their owners to death. See Letter 8th and 9th in the collection of Mr. de Voltaire's original letters.—Certain it is, indeed, that much greater evils are to be dreaded from the fury of a people, ignorant and blind, than from the resistance and jealousy of a people inquisitive and enlightened,

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thing as a free government upon earth, and every human right would have been overwhelmed under an universal and savage despotism.—It is thus, that in RELIGION, a set of holy usurpers have pretended that there are mysteries in religion of which the people are not judges, and into which they should not enquire; and that, for this reason, they ought to resign to *them* the direction of their faith and consciences. It would be a disgrace to virtue to suppose that it requires an acquiescence in such insolent claims; or that it is a part of the character of a righteous man that he is always ready to crouch to every tyrant, and never exercises his own judgment, or shews any sense of his own dignity as a rational creature and a freeman. Away with all such degrading and miserable sentiments. Let us remember that we are *men* and not *cattle*; that the sovereignty in every country belongs to the people; and that a righteous man is the best member of every community, and the best friend to his species, by being the most irreconcilable to slavery, the most sensible to every encroachment on the rights of mankind, the most zealous for equal and universal liberty, and the most active in endeavouring to propagate just sentiments of religion and government. In short, a virtuous man must be a firm and determined patriot. Power cannot awe him. Money cannot bribe him. He scruples no labour or expence in supporting any necessary measures
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of government; but at the same time he will resist any oppressive measures. If he is an elector, he is sure to give an uninfluenced and honest vote. If he is a magistrate, he is strictly just and impartial, *a terror to evil doers, and a praise to all who do well*. If he is a senator, he is uncorrupt and faithful. In every station he studies to promote the peace and prosperity of his country. He possesses integrity to assist in directing its councils, and courage to defend its honour and to fight its battles against all enemies.

Such is a righteous man in his *public capacity*, or as a member of a state. I must go on to observe that in his *private capacity* he practises every private and social virtue. He is industrious in his calling, upright in his dealings, and true to his engagements. He is a good husband, a good parent, a good neighbour, and a good friend, as well as a good citizen. Within the circle of his family and acquaintance, he maintains the same regard to equity and liberty, that he does in the more extended circle of his fellow subjects and fellow men. He renders to all their dues, *honour to whom honour, custom to whom custom*, and always acts to others as he desires that others would act to him. He is charitable and generous, as far as his abilities reach; but he avoids all parade and ostentation; and fixes his expences below his income, that he may enjoy that happy independence which will place him above temptation. In every transac-

tion of commerce, his fairness may be depended on. In the execution of every trust he is exact and faithful. He shuns all the excesses of pleasure and voluptuousness, never suffers his passions to carry him beyond the bounds of chastity and temperance, and within the inclosure of his own breast, where only one eye observes him, he is as just, and fair, and candid, as he appears to be on the open stage of the world.

Once more. He is conscientious and diligent in the discharge of all the duties of religion. This is the crowning part of his character. It is religion gives dignity and efficacy to all our moral and public principles; nor is it possible there should be a consistent character of virtue without it. A *virtuous* man, therefore, must be a *religious* man. He worships God in private, in his family, and in public. He is governed in his whole conduct by a regard to the Deity; looks to him in all that happens; and joins constantly with his fellow-creatures in those social exercises of piety, which are the proper expressions of the homage and fealty which he owes to him as the Supreme Governor and Judge.

I will on this subject only add, that the three particulars I have named are inseparable in a righteous character. Public virtue cannot subsist without private; nor can public and private virtue subsist without religion. As a truly virtuous and religious man must be a patriot, so a true patriot must

must be a virtuous and religious man. The obligations of righteousness are the same in all their branches, and a righteous man cannot violate them *habitually* in any instance. Is it likely, that a man who is false to *private* engagements, will not be also false to *public* ones; or that a man, who, in his family is a tyrant, will not be likewise a tyrant as a *magistrate*? Is it likely that a man, who has given up to his passions his *internal* liberty, should be a true friend to liberty; or that a man, who will cheat his tradesmen or betray his friends, will not give a wicked vote, and betray his country? Can you imagine that a spendthrift in his own concerns, will make an œconomist in managing the concerns of others; that a wild gamester will take due care of the stake of a kingdom; or that an unprincipled debauchee will make an upright judge or a sound statesman? Can a man who shews no regard to God his Maker, or to Christ his Saviour; who is such an enemy to society as to neglect countenancing, by his example, those forms of worship on which the order of society depends; and so void of the fundamental principles of goodness, as to be capable of being habitually atheistical in his conduct: Can, I say, such a person possess any great regard for the interests of society?—Let us reject all such absurd imaginations. Treachery, venality and villainy must be the effects of dissipation, voluptuousness and impiety. These vices sap the foun-

foundations of virtue*. They render men necessitous and supple, and ready at any time to sacrifice their consciences, or to fly to a court, in order to repair a shattered fortune, and procure supplies for prodigality. Let us remember these truths in judging of men. Let us consider that true goodness is uniform and consistent; and learn never to place any great confidence in those pretenders to public spirit, who are not men of virtuous characters. They may boast of their attachment to a public cause, but they want the living root of persevering virtue, and should not be depended on.

Having given you this account of righteous men, I am next to take notice of the causes which produce that dependence, intimated in my text, of the fate of a country on such men. This dependence is derived, first, from the natures of things. Such men are the health and vigour of a state. They are the order that preserve it from anarchy, and the vital springs which give it life and motion. When they are withdrawn, a nation as necessarily falls into ruin as a building falls when its pillars are destroyed, or as an animal body putrifies when the fluids stagnate, and

* Some of the expressions in this passage, and a few others in the latter part of this discourse, may perhaps be too strong. But I am not at liberty to suppress them. Every candid person must see that my views are *general*; and, should any one imagine the contrary, he will greatly injure me.

the animal functions cease to be performed.—There is a distant country, once united to us, where every inhabitant has in his house (as a part of his furniture) a book on law and government, to enable him to understand his civil rights; a musket to enable him to defend these rights; and a Bible to enable him to understand and practise his religion.—What can hurt such a country?—We have invaded, and for some time have been endeavouring to subdue this country. Is it any wonder that we have not succeeded? How secure must it be, while it preserves its virtue, against all attacks?

But *Secondly*, the dependence of states on the virtuous men in it is not only thus derived from the necessary course and operations of causes and effects, but from the positive will of the Deity. There is an invisible and almighty power which over-rules the operations of natural causes, and presides over all events. This power is a *righteous* power, and it must be friendly to the *righteous*; and therefore, will direct events for the advantage of the country where they reside. In consequence of the particular favour of God to them, and his delight in them, they stay his hand when lifted up to scourge a nation; and we may consider him as saying, in the words already quoted, Gen. xix. 22. *I cannot do any thing till you are gone.*

I am in danger of being too tedious on this subject. Nothing now remains but that I

conclude with briefly applying the whole to the present state of this country.

On this occasion, I feel myself much at a loss how to address you, not knowing whether I should do it in the way of encouragement or despair. When I think of this congregation; when I recollect the many worthy persons among my acquaintance and friends; and consider what multitudes more there must be that I can never know, and in situations where perhaps I should not expect to find them—when I make only such reflections, I feel comfort, and am disposed to conclude, that all may be well, and that the number of the virtuous among us is still considerable enough to save us.

But when I extend my views, and look abroad into the world; when I consider the accounts I am often hearing of the court, the camp, and the senate, and the profligacy that prevails almost every where; I fall back into diffidence, and am ready to believe there is no room for hope. There are, it is true, among all our parties, political and religious, many excellent characters still left; but the comfort they give me is damped by the following considerations.

First. They are a smaller number than they were. Public and private virtue has been for some time declining. Never, perhaps, was there a time when men shewed so little regard to *decency* in their vices, or were so *shameless* in their venality

and debaucheries. When men are wanted for the business of any department of the state, do you ever find that only *honest* men are sought for; or that it is, on such an occasion, any objection to a man that he scoffs at religion, or that he is known to be a drunkard, a gamester, an adulterer, or an atheist? What vacancies would be made in public offices, were all but men of pure manners and independent integrity taken from them?

As to RELIGION, nothing is plainer than that it was never at so low an ebb. Even among Protestant Non-conformists, the places of worship are almost deserted. In this great metropolis, several of our best congregations have sunk to nothing. Many are sinking, and few flourish. Our religious zeal is dying; and the most valuable part of the dissenting interest is likely soon to be ground to death between enthusiasm on the one hand, and luxury and fashion on the other.

But Secondly. Another discouraging circumstance in our present state is, that a considerable part of the righteous themselves, or of that *description* of men to whom we must look for the salvation of the kingdom, are only *nominally* righteous. They are a smaller number than they were; and of this number many are false and hollow. Nothing, indeed, is more discouraging, than to find that a man has been secretly wicked, who, for many years, has carried with him every appear-

appearance of the strictest probity and piety. We are all of us often making discoveries of this kind; and they have a tendency to destroy in us all confidence in our fellow-creatures. Take away from the honest men all that are dishonest, and from the religious men all the *hypocrites*, and what a melancholy reduction will be made of a party, which, without such a reduction, would be too small?—Among the persons to whom it is natural for us to look for the defence of our country, are those in high-life, and among our *senators*, who have taken up the cry of public liberty and virtue, and oppose the oppressions of power. They seem, indeed, a glorious band; and it is impossible not to admire their zeal. But alas! how often have we been duped by their professions? How often has their zeal proved to be nothing but a cover for ambition, and a struggle for places? How many instances have there been of their forgetting all their declarations, as soon as they have got into power? How often do you hear of their extravagance and immoralities? I have more than once, in the preceding discourse, spoken of *Patriotism*. I have mentioned it as one of the first and best qualities of a righteous man. But I have done this with pain, on account of the disgrace into which, what is so called has fallen. Patriotism, like Religion, is an excellent thing. But *true* Patriotism, like *true* Religion, is a scarce thing. In the *State*, as well as in the *Church*, there are

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abominable impostors, who have blasted the credit of these divine excellencies to such a degree, that they cannot be mentioned as parts of a good character without an apology. Is it possible there should be a worse symptom in the state of a kingdom?—How mortifying is it to find the nation's best friends falling so short as they do of our wishes? What measures for restoring a dying constitution? What reformation of abuses, what public points do they hold forth to us, and pledge themselves to accomplish? How little does it signify who are *in*, or who are *out* of power, if the constitution continues to bleed, and that system of corruption is not destroyed, which has been for some time destroying the kingdom?—In short, where will you find the disinterested *patriots*, who are ready, in this time of distress, to serve their country for *nothing**? Where will you find the *honest statesmen*, who are above making use of undue influence, and will trust for support to the rectitude of their measures; the *virtuous electors* or *representatives*, who fear an oath and have no price; or the professors of religion, who cannot be induced to do any thing mean or base?—I wish not to be mistaken. I am far from meaning that none such can be found. I have acknowledged (and it is all my encouragement) that

* One such the nation has lately heard of with admiration. I believe I am happy enough to know some more; and though their services may not be called for, God will recompense them.

such may be found among * all our parties. I only mean to intimate a doubt whether they are not blended with so many hypocrites, and decreased so much in number, as now no longer to make a body of men very discernible, and of sufficient consequence to save us. Would to God there was no reason for entertaining this doubt.

Perhaps we are, in general, too much disposed always to think the present times the worst. I am, probably, myself under the influence of this disposition; but, after studying to be upon my guard against it, I find myself incapable of believing that miserable declensions have not taken place among us.

As an evidence of this, and a farther alarming circumstance in the state of the nation, I would

* In this I differ extremely from the learned and worthy and very liberal Bishop of Exeter, who (in a sermon preached on the 30th of January last, before the Lords spiritual and temporal) calls the great men who for some time have been opposing measures which have brought the kingdom near its last struggles, *a desperate and daring faction*. It is probable, therefore, that he thinks no good men can be found among them. This, at least, must be the opinion of the Archbishop of York, who, in a noted sermon, has called them a body of men, who are held together by the same bond that keeps together the "lowest and wickedest combinations;" that is, "rogues and thieves," as this censure was expressed in the pulpit. I have in this discourse been a little free in delivering censures; but had I delivered any such censures as these, I should have thought myself inexcusable.

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mention to you that levity and dissipation, and rage for pernicious diversions, which prevail among us. Not long ago *play-houses* were confined to *London*. But now there is scarcely a considerable town in the kingdom without them. In manufacturing towns they produce very bad effects; and yet there are not many of these towns where they are not established. Think here, particularly, of those scenes of lewdness and intemperance, our *masquerades*. These are late improvements in our public pleasures; but I question whether in *Sodom* itself any thing much worse could have been found. We answer, indeed, too nearly to the account given by our Saviour of this city before its destruction. *They eat and drank. They married and were given in marriage. They bought and sold, and planted and builded.* That is, they enjoyed themselves in ease and mirth. They gave themselves up to sensuality and criminal indulgencies, without thinking of any danger. *But the same day that Lot went out, it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven and destroyed them all.* Luke xvii. 28. With similar gaiety and security do we now give ourselves up to intrigue and dissipation in the midst of danger. Heaven is angry with us, and our existence is threatened; but it seems to give us no concern. In the course of a few years we have been reduced from the highest pinnacle of glory to the brink of ruin. A third of the empire is lost; and at the same time we see
powerful

powerful enemies combining against us, our commerce languishing, and our debts and taxes, already insupportable, increasing fast, and likely soon to crush us. Not long ago, this would have produced an alarm which nothing could have quieted. In the last war, particularly, I remember that only the loss of *Minorca* threw the kingdom into a commotion, which cost an admiral his life, and produced a change of measures. But now, though in a condition unspeakably worse, the kingdom is insensible. We fly to feasts and amusements, and dance the round of pleasure. The same measures go on. The same ministers direct these measures; and sometimes we hear of new emoluments conferred upon them, just as if, instead of having brought us into imminent danger, they had saved us. One would have thought it impossible, that the stupefaction of luxury and vice could have proceeded so far in so short a period. But such torpors, like mortifications before death, have been the common forerunners of calamity. Seldom has it happened, when debauchery and extravagance and a pompous manner of living have come to their height, that they have not been followed by a sudden transition to slavery and misery.

I shall mention to you but one circumstance more that checks my hopes. I mean the fact just alluded to, or the uniform effect of all our public measures for the last four or five years. This is

so remarkable, as naturally to dispose us to conclude that we are indeed forsaken by Heaven. Nothing has prospered. Several opportunities for getting back to security and peace have been neglected. Offers of reconciliation, which once would have been joyfully accepted, have been made too late. Every step has plunged us deeper into difficulties; so that now we see a quarrel about *tea*, which lenity and wisdom might have accommodated immediately, increased into a war more destructive than any in which this country has been ever engaged. Must we not in this see the hand of Providence? Does it not give us reason to fear that God, having no intentions of mercy towards us, has infatuated our councils?—Will you give me leave to mention one particular proof of this observation?

At the time the alliance with *France* was notified, it seems to me that an opening was left, by which we might have got back to safety and peace. The alliance was *commercial*, and not *exclusive**: We might have consented to it, and determined to withdraw our forces from the colonies. Our situation was such as rendered this necessary; and, in consequence of it, we might in time have recovered their confidence, and secured, by a family compact, every advantage that could be derived

* It was to become what it now is (*offensive and defensive*) only *in the event* of its being resisted by this country.

from a connection with them. But we had not fortitude enough to consider properly our situation; nor wisdom and magnanimity enough to conform to it. National safety was forced to give way to national dignity. Hostilities against *France* were begun immediately. And now, with our strength spent, and public credit tottering, we seem to be just entering into a war with the combined powers of *France*, *Spain*, and *America*.

This is, indeed, a prospect so frightful, that I must turn my attention from it. Never did so dark a cloud hang over this nation. May Heaven avert the storm; or, if it must break, may its fury be mitigated, and the issue directed to the general advantage of the interest of truth, liberty and virtue. But, whatever happens, may you and I be found of the number of those righteous persons who have acted the part of faithful citizens, and with whom all shall go well for ever.

ADDITIONS to the NOTE in Page 30.

It must not be understood, that I mean here to propose a general measure which ought to be adopted. I know this to be impracticable. I only mean to intimate a wish that amidst the profusion and plunder that are going forward, some examples of a noble disinterestedness were exhibited by the friends of public liberty.—The mere pay of the principal officers of state is a trifling object; but there are unnecessary places and pensions, and perquisites and profits annexed to many public employments, which form a great object.

I must farther repeat here, that I have no doubt but that, in the present opposition, there are many of the best as well as ablest men in the kingdom; and that it may, for ought I know, be more virtuous and more to be trusted than any former opposition. Certain I am, at least, that as far as it is an opposition only to *measures*, the nation has reason to bless it.

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POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING

REMARKS on a Passage in the BISHOP
of LONDON'S Sermon preached at the
Chapel Royal on *Ash-Wednesday* last.

THE Bishop of *London*, in a sermon preached
on *Ash-Wednesday* last in the Chapel
Royal, and since published and addressed to the
Reverend the Clergy and inhabitants of the dio-
cese of *London*, has pointed me out as a person
“ whose study it has long been to introduce con-
“ fusion, to encourage sedition, and to destroy
“ all rule and authority, by traducing govern-
“ ment, despising dominion, speaking evil of
“ dignities, and assuming visionary and imprac-
“ ticable principles as the only true foundations
“ of a free government, which tend to raise dis-
“ contents in the people, to *harden some in actual*
“ *rebel-*

" *rebellion, and to dispose others to follow their example.*"—Page 17.

Having been always used to venerate the character, as well as the learning and abilities of the Bishop of *London*, I could not but be astonished at this censure. His name and authority will give it credit among many uninformed persons; and they will conclude that the doctrine concerning government which has occasioned it, must be very shocking, and that the teacher of such a doctrine must be very profligate. I will therefore beg leave briefly to state this doctrine.

In opposition to those principles which make civil government to be an APPOINTMENT OF HEAVEN, and the authority of civil governors to be founded on inherent rights of dominion, in the exercise of which they are accountable only to God; I have maintained, that civil government, like our clothes or our houses, is the *contrivance of men* for obtaining protection and security, or an expedient for defending their persons and property against injury; and that, consequently, the power of civil governors is a DELEGATION OF TRUST from the people for this purpose, which they have a right to limit as they please, and, in the exercise of which, civil governors are accountable to *them* as well as to God,—I have, in the
follow,

following words, summed up all I mean on this subject—" Legitimate government, as opposed
 " to oppression and tyranny, consists in the do-
 " minion of equal laws made with common con-
 " sent, or of MEN OVER THEMSELVES ; and not
 " in the dominion of communities over commu-
 " nities, or of ANY MEN OVER OTHER MEN."
 See the Introduction to the two Tracts on Civil Liberty, page 7th.

This is the doctrine concerning government which the learned and worthy Bishop has, at the Chapel Royal, and in an enumeration of the national vices, censured as *visionary* and *dangerous* ; and in order to prove it so, he has, in a note, quoted two passages from my Tracts ; in the first of which I have said, " that as far as, in any in-
 " stance, the operation of any cause comes in to
 " restrain the power of self-government in a state,
 " so far slavery is introduced." And in the second, " *that the representation of a kingdom ought to*
 " *be complete* ; and that no state, a part only of
 " which is represented in the legislature that go-
 " verns it, can be said to be *self-governed*." See first Tract, page 5. and second Tract, page 6. From these assertions, he says, *it follows, that a vast majority of the people of England, all that have no vote for representatives in parliament, are slaves.* Ib. page 17.

In order to judge properly of these passages, and the inference which the Bishop draws from them, I must desire it may be considered that I have repeatedly said, that by the state I mean "the body of independent agents in the state;" and that, consequently, the two propositions which the Bishop must maintain in opposition to those which he has condemned, are

First, That the body of independent agents in a state may be free in those instances in which they want the power of self-government. And

Secondly, That they may possess the power of self government, and yet a vast majority of them have no vote or share, either by themselves or their representatives, in government.

Our situation in this country is indeed calamitous, if, as the Bishop intimates, we are under a necessity of either admitting these propositions, or granting that we are slaves.—The following observations, however, on which I have laid much stress, should not be forgotten.

In the first place; liberty and slavery may exist more or less in different states; and, in one and the same state, they may be mixed and blended in various ways and degrees.—What I have asserted is, that *as far as* a state wants a complete representation, *so far* it is not *self-governed*; and that as far as it is not self-governed,

so far it is enslaved. If it is *partially* represented, it is *partially* enslaved. If it is not *at all* represented, it is *entirely* enslaved.

Secondly, I have carefully distinguished between the casual enjoyment of freedom, and a constitution of government *securing* freedom. A state may enjoy freedom under a *despot*, if he is wise and virtuous; but such freedom depending on the will of one man, which in the end must prove the misery of all men, and not being derived from a free constitution, the state would, in reality, be enslaved.—So, in BRITAIN, we might enjoy freedom in consequence of the lenity or connivance of our governors; but if it depended chiefly on *their* goodness, or if a *vast majority* of the people had no share in legislation, we should, undoubtedly, whatever happiness we might enjoy in other respects, be *so far* enslaved*. Second Tract, page 3d.

Thirdly,

* In the second Tract, page 13, &c. I have further distinguished between the liberty of the *citizen*—the liberty of the *government*—and the liberty of the *community*.—"A citizen," I have said, "is free when the power of commanding his own conduct, *as far as* he does not injure others, is *secured* to him, by being his own legislator; that is, by his having a share in the legislature that governs him, either by himself personally, or by representatives, in choosing whom he has a free vote.—A *government* is free when constituted in such
" a man."

Thirdly, I have asserted, that even a partial representation in the legislature of a country is in the highest degree favourable to public liberty, and one of the greatest blessings, PROVIDED it is freely chosen, subject to no corrupt influence, frequently changed, and vested with such powers as the constitution gives to our House of Commons. Second Tract, pages 35 and 39. —But I will not dwell here on points which I have already endeavoured, with a good deal of care, to explain *.

It may be more necessary to put the Bishop in mind, that the theory of government with which he is so much displeased, may be found not only in Mr. *Locke's* writings, but in all the writers on laws and government who have been most admired in this country; and that the assertion by which I have given most offence, namely, “That in a free state every man ought to be his own legislator,” was *first* the assertion of *Montesquieu*, and has been since the assertion of Mr. *Justice Blackstone* †. Language to this effect has been hitherto the com-

“a manner as to give *this security*.—And the freedom of the community is *nearly* the same among communities, that the freedom of a citizen is among his fellow-citizens.”

* See the first part of the Additional Observations on Civil Liberty.

† Spirit of Laws, book 11th, chap. 6th.—Commentaries on the Laws of England. Page 15th, 1st Vol. octavo edition.

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mon language of all the friends of civil liberty ; and it has been adopted by many of the reverend Clergy themselves in their sermons on public occasions. One instance of this deserves the Bishop's particular notice.—The excellent Dr. *Lowth*, in a sermon preached at the assizes at *Durham* in 1764, observes, “ That the greatest and most important
 “ privilege that any people can possibly enjoy is
 “ to be governed by laws framed by their own
 “ advice or consent.” This he represents “ as
 “ the true liberty of a state, and the particular
 “ happiness of the collective body of people in
 “ this country, in virtue of the right of repre-
 “ sentation which they enjoy, the act of repre-
 “ sentatives freely chosen by themselves being,”
 he says, “ to be esteemed their own act *.”—Is
 not

* See pages 11th and 12th.—In page 14th he says, “ that the
 “ true and perfect liberty of a people consists in their enjoying
 “ security from oppression under the protection of THEIR OWN
 “ laws.” And in page 12th, that “ the people of this nation do
 “ enjoy, as fully as in the nature of things they are capable of
 “ enjoying, and as far as they have the will and the virtue to
 “ enjoy it; the great advantage of being governed by laws
 “ of their own framing, or to which they give their free as-
 “ sent.”—How different is this from the assertion of the
 Bishop, that a *vast majority* of the people of *England*, having
 no votes for representatives in parliament, do not give their
 assent to the laws by which they are governed, and there-
 fore are not *self-governed*.—It would be doing him an injury

not this the same with saying, that a free people are *their own* legislators, or that *free* government is *self-government*?—How unfortunate then am I in having brought upon myself, by such expressions, the Bishop's ill opinion?

I should be very sorry to say any thing that may give his Lordship new offence.—I must, however, on the present occasion, be allowed to entreat him to review his severe accusation of me, and to consider whether it is not unworthy of his good sense and liberality.—I must farther take the liberty to suggest to his consideration, whether he ought not to feel some tenderness for the rebellion of the colonies, if, indeed, as he intimates, they have been *hardened* in it by principles which, though now reprobated by him, appear to have been formerly his own.—And also whether, among the sins of the nation, which he so justly laments in his sermon, and which have brought us into our present distress, it would not have been right to have mentioned that degeneracy of principle which lately has turned so many *Whigs* into *Tories*, infected even the sacred order, and led some of the venerable Bishops themselves to decry as visionary, impracticable and

to suppose, that by this *vast majority* he means, with some triflers on this subject, not the free agents, but the women and children and beggars of *England*.

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seditions, sentiments of civil liberty which were once the boast of the kingdom, and to which we owe our excellent constitution, the glorious Revolution, the Accession, and all our dignity and happiness as a free or self-governed country.

F I N I S.

testimony, sentiments of civil liberty which were
 the soul of the Revolution, and to which
 we owe our excellent Constitution, the glorious
 Revolution, the execution, and all our glory and
 happiness as a free and self-governed country.

A. W. I. & Co.

